



Brush Lake State Park Indian Education For All Lesson Plan

Title

History Revisited

Content Area

Social Studies

Grade level

5th/6th

Duration

2 50-minute periods

Goals (Montana Standards/Essential Understandings)

Essential Understanding 6: History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

Social Studies Content Standard 1: Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

Benchmark 1: apply the steps of an inquiry process (i.e., identify question or problem, locate and evaluate potential resources, gather and synthesize information, create a new product, and evaluate product and process).

Introduction

Brush Lake State Park is located in Sheridan County, northeastern Montana. The local history of the park lands portray that white homesteaders did not occupy the land around the lake until 1914. At this time, or shortly after, the lake became a swimming hole and picnic area for farmers, ranchers, and others (McKean 2005).

An archaeological survey of the parkland reports almost constant use of the area for more than 10,000 years, probably by ancestors of present-day American Indians. Specifically, the survey reports that these lands were occupied and used by the Assiniboiné tribe before the Lewis and Clark expedition *ca.* 1805 (Wood and Assoc. 2005). The Assiniboiné, along with Dakota (Sioux), now live on Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Indian Reservations, headquartered at Poplar and Harlem, Montana, respectively. Brush Lake is about 15 miles east of Reserve, a town on Muddy Creek in the northeastern corner of the Fort Peck Reservation.

A local history of Sheridan County portrays and praises the white settlement of the county, including the use of Brush Lake by local whites (Asshiem 1970). This local history makes no mention of the ancient, historic, or contemporary use of the land and lake by American Indians and by the Assiniboiné, specifically. However, due to their obvious prehistoric as well as historic occupation of these lands, the entire area of present-day northeastern Montana was deemed the territory of the Assiniboiné in the Fort Laramie Treaty (1851). The present boundaries of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation were drawn in 1886, opening up the territory outside the boundaries, including Brush Lake, for white settlement.

By 1883, the buffalo had disappeared from their northern range and the life style of the Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes changed dramatically. It was also during this same period that the Assiniboiné Tribe lost without “just compensation” the territory outlined by the original 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. Through a series of actions and without the consent of the Assiniboiné, Congress in responding to pressure from white ranchers and settlers, opened the original reservation for settlement (Indian Health Service, Fort Peck Service Unit, *History*).

Magnus Asshiem’s *Sheridan’s Daybreak: A Story of Sheridan County and Its Pioneers*, is a portrayal and praise of white settlement in northeastern Montana, and specifically of the area now comprising Sheridan County. This book comprises more than 1,000 pages, and is the only history of Sheridan County available in libraries. Andrew McKean’s article, “Oasis on the Prairie,” in *Montana Outdoor*, portrays and praises the white settlement and use of the area, as well. Simultaneously, however, the website, *Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux History*, portrays and praises a more realistic composite history of both the Indian and white settlement of the area, though incomplete regarding the latter (see other similar histories listed in the Extensions section below).

Overview

Social Studies

In this lesson students will explore the following secondary historical sources: (1) Andrew McKean’s online article (see URL in Extensions below), “Oasis on the Prairie,” in *Montana Outdoors*; (2) the website, *Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux History* and/or others selected from the Extensions section below; and (3) *Cultural Resources Inventory Brush Lake State Park*, pp. 1-6. Based on their research of secondary historiographic sources, students will demonstrate their knowledge of a more accurate local history of the Brush Lake area, by portraying their own individual local histories incorporating the history and contemporary cultures of the white homesteaders and businessmen and Assiniboiné and Dakota (Sioux), now living on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

Materials or Resources Needed

Computers; Internet; selections from Magnus Asshiem’s *Sheridan’s Daybreak: A Story of Sheridan County and Its Pioneers* (per U.S. copyright laws, up to 10% of the book may be copied); *Cultural Resources Inventory Brush Lake State Park*, pp. 1-6 (a single copy is available from Brush Lake State Park for copying).

Activities and Procedures

Class Period 1

1. Assign students as pre-reading selections from *Sheridan's Daybreak*.
2. Assign students to find the following website on the Internet: *Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux History*. Other histories, along with URL addresses, on this topic that are listed in the Extensions are also very good. (This material may also be downloaded by the teachers and copied for students, or they can find and read it online as part of meeting Technology Content Standards)
3. Lead a full-class discussion comparing and contrasting the multiple views represented in the readings
 - a. What is history? (See Attachment A for a definition/discussion.)
 - b. Why are there two histories?
 - c. Whose history is more important?
 - d. If one seems more important, why is one more important than the other?
 - e. Whose story is it?
 - f. How can we make one history that tells the whole story?
 - g. Is it important to have one history, or multiple histories?
 - h. How has one history taken precedence over the other?
 - i. What are the problems associated with writing a history that incorporates multiple views?

Class Period 2

1. Assign to students as pre-reading, *Cultural Resources Inventory Brush Lake State Park*, pp. 1-6.
2. Break the students into small groups and have them analyze the reading, comparing and contrasting it to the previous readings used. Ask them to consider the following:
 - a. When homesteaders arrived in northeastern Montana, they found a challenging environment where survival was the goal. The Assiniboiné, Dakota (Sioux) and other Indian people had been meeting these same challenges for thousands of years and had evolved complex economic, agricultural and cultural methods of coping. Compare and contrast what life was like for American Indians and settlers at the beginning of the 20th century in northeastern Montana.
 - b. Compare and contrast: How were the following same and how were they different for the two groups?
 - i. Housing
 - ii. Food procurement
 - iii. Views of land values, including land use
 - iv. Tools and implements
 - v. Animals
 - vi. Recreation and fun

Assessment

Using hand drawings, pictures, and text, produce a poster comparing and contrasting Assiniboiné/Dakota (Sioux) with white settlers in the early 20th century—use the six areas in 2b, just above. The text could be narratives of interviews the students conduct with family members or others with knowledge of the area from the early 20th century.

Extensions (Online Materials and Teaching Aids) & Bibliography

Asshiem, Magnus, 1970 (Complier and Collator). *Sheridan's Daybreak: A Story of Sheridan County and Its Pioneers*. Great Falls, Montana: Blue Print & Letter Co., Printers.

Fort Peck Indian Reservation. *Tribal History*. <http://www.fortpecktribes.org/>

Indian Health Service, Fort Peck Service Unit. *History of the Fort Peck Reservation*. <http://www.ihs.gov/facilitieservices/areaoffices/billings/ftpeck/fpsu%2Dhistory.asp>

McKean, Andrew, Photos by Matt Long. (Sept./Oct. 2005) Oasis on the Prairie, *Montana Outdoor*. URL. <http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/Articles/2005/BrushLakeSP.htm>

Montana Department of Commerce. *Fort Peck Indian Reservation History*. http://montanakids.com/db_engine/presentations/presentation.asp

O'Boyle, Robert C., et al, 2005. *Cultural Resource Management Report, Brush Lake State Park, Sheridan County, Montana*. Loma, Montana: Gar C. Wood and Assoc.,

Turning Bear, Jim, et al. *Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux History*. www.montana.edu/wwwfpcc/tribes

Attachments

Attachment A

What is history?¹

NOUN: His·to·ry; pl. his·to·ries

1. A narrative of events; a story.
2.
 - a. A chronological record of events, as of the life or development of a people or institution, often including an explanation of, or commentary on, those events: *a history of the Vikings*.
 - b. A formal written account of related natural phenomena: *a history of volcanoes*.
 - c. A record of a patient's medical background.
 - d. An established record or pattern of behavior: *an inmate with a history of substance abuse*.
3. The branch of knowledge that records and analyzes past events: *"History has a long-range perspective" (Elizabeth Gurley Flynn)*.
4.
 - a. The events forming the subject matter of a historical account.
 - b. The aggregate of past events or human affairs: *basic tools used throughout history*.
 - c. An interesting past: *a house with history*.
 - d. Something that belongs to the past: *Their troubles are history now*.
 - e. Slang One that is no longer worth consideration: *Why should we worry about him? He's history!*
5. A drama based on historical events: *the histories of Shakespeare*.

¹ <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/history>